

# BPN

**BUTANE-PROPANE NEWS**  
Propane industry publications since 1939

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## Choice of PERC President Remains Confidential for Now

**T**he Propane Education and Research Council (PERC) chose its top staff member at its regularly scheduled meeting held in Dallas in mid-November. The council voted its choice in a closed session and later, back in open session, voted to keep its choice under wraps for a few weeks to allow PERC's new executive time to inform his/her employer. PERC also decided not to disclose the location of PERC's future headquarters.

When the public session resumed, Jim Ferrell of Ferrellgas (Liberty, Mo.), chairman of the administrative task force that conducted a national search for candidates, offered an unusual motion. The council adopted his task force's still-secret report, which he said recommended hiring one particular candidate. The council gave the task force full authority to negotiate an employment contract, approved an undisclosed location as its headquarters, and provided that the mystery employee's identity not be made public until that person notifies current employers. Ferrell estimated that it would be sometime in December before the identity of the "stealth staffer" (designated as PERC's "president") will finally be disclosed.

### Other Council Business

The Nov. 18 meeting was attended by 19 of the council's 21 members, including first-timer Lynn Bourdon of PG&E Gas Transmission-Texas (Houston), who was recently appointed by GPA to fill a vacancy created by the resignation

of John Ehlers, formerly with Valero Hydrocarbons (San Antonio).

Though the council in October authorized hiring Arthur Anderson, the independent international accounting firm, to handle its financial matters, contract negotiations on that relationship had not yet concluded, according to PERC's counsel, Ed Newberry.

The PERC assessment on odorized propane begins Jan. 1 and is expected to raise \$8 million the first year. Margaret Griffith of Piedmont Propane (Charlotte, N.C.), treasurer of the council, reported that the council owes \$181,000 in reimbursable expenses to NPGA for interim staff support (2.7% of anticipated first-year revenues). Ferrell offered a motion to add even more money to that reimbursement, equal to NPGA's "average return on investment." That motion was approved without dissent.

The council also finalized its assessment handbook. Responding to pleas from about a dozen small wholesalers for reimbursement of the costs of paying the new assessment, a clause was added to allow all remitters to request in writing a one-time reimbursement of \$150 for the first odorization point, \$100 for the second one, and \$50 for each subsequent one, up to a maximum of \$500. David Lugar of Conoco (Houston), chairman of the collections and enforcement task force, said he expects small wholesalers to be the primary beneficiaries of that clause, which should help them defray some assessment startup costs. With about

500 remitters, the new provision could cost the council as much as \$250,000, though he expects actual requests to be fewer and less costly.

On another Ferrell motion, the council adopted a definition of administrative expenses, which are capped at 10% of total revenue. Drafted by Newberry, it says in part that "the collection of assessments, provision of rebates or reduced assessments to the states, and other similar duties, are not administrative expenses. Similarly startup expenses, expenses associated with undertaking the initial referendum to establish the council, and other similar expenses are not administrative expenses." While "the president's salary will be an administrative expense," Newberry told the council, whether or not the wages and benefits of other employees are similarly categorized, "depends on what they do."

Bill McHenry, chairman of the state liaison task force, said no comments had been received concerning a draft policy for disbursing 20% of receipts to state organizations. The Texas Railroad Commission's Alternative Fuels Education and Research Division's (AFRED) executive, Dan Kelly, presented a letter stating that a new group, the State Propane Association and Checkoff Executives, has formed to provide input to PERC. Executives representing more than 20 states participated in an Oct. 20 organizational meeting in Illinois, he said.